

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5038

INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON

S E C R E T ROME 7333

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, VT, PO

SUBJECT: VATICAN-PORTUGUESE RELATIONS

1. VATICAN "FOREIGN MINISTER" ARCHBISHOP CASAROLI TOLD US MAY 28 THAT, DESPITE FAVORABLE IMPRESSION PORTUGUESE EVENTS HAVE MADE ON HIM, HE UNABLE TO FEEL REALLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT FUTURE BECAUSE THERE ARE STILL JUST TOO MANY UNKNOWNNS IN THE EQUATION. NUNCIO SENSI HAS RECENTLY SENT A DETAILED REPORT ON THE COUP AND ITS AFTERMATH, BUT CASAROLI SAID IT NOT BASED ON ANY SPECIAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION BUT RATHER DERIVED FROM NUNCIO'S NORMAL CONTACTS IN CHURCH AND GOVERNMENT. STILL FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT THAT GENERAL DE SPINOLA AND OTHER JUNTA FIGURES ARE REALLY MAJOR POWERS IN PORTUGAL, CASAROLI CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THERE ARE CERTAIN STILL-TO-BE-IDENTIFIED FIGURES BEHIND CAPTAINS AND MAJORS, AND THAT THESE FIGURES ARE REAL POWERS IN PORTUGAL.

2. CASAROLI MENTIONED IN PASSING THAT HE HAD MET FOR TWO HOURS WITH MARIO SOARES AT PAPAL NUNCIATURE IN ROME ON MAY 5. SOARES IMPRESSED HIM EXTREMELY FAVORABLY AS AN INTELLIGENT, MODERATE AND WELL-BALANCED INDIVIDUAL. CASAROLI CAME AWAY FROM THIS MEETING WITH IMPRESSION THAT SOARES, ALTHOUGH A SOCIALIST, WAS FAR FROM BEING A DOCTRINARY MARXIST. SOARES OBSERVED THAT SOME MEMBERS OF PORTUGUESE HIERARCHY HAD PERHAPS GONE TOO FAR IN SUPPORTING

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THE FORMER GOVERNMENT BUT, ON THE OTHER HAND, HE PRAISED CARDINAL

RIBEIRO AND BISHOPS OF PORTO AND NAMPULA FOR THEIR WORTHY STANDS ON CIVIL RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE. SOARES ALSO SAID THAT HE SAW A POLITICAL ROLE FOR CATHOLICS IN FUTURE PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT.

3. CASAROLI DOES NOT ANTICIPATE ANY DEMANDS FROM NEW PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT FOR TRANSFER OF BISHOPS EITHER IN PORTUGAL OR AFRICAN TERRITORIES, ALTHOUGH HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SOME EXTREMIST GROUPS HAD BEEN MAKING SUCH SUGGESTIONS. VOLPE

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